

morning reading to kids at a local elementary school, but I know that you will be hearing from him later. First, I would like to say a few words about the crisis we face as a nation if we don't all work toward improving literacy in this Nation.

Reading is the key to our children's future. There is an easy way to think about this: from first to third grades you learn to read—from third grade on you read to learn. Now, we have heard some frightening statistics as of late, about our children's performance in various subjects compared to other nations. I want to remind my colleagues and everyone in every community around the country—we have a 51 percent functional illiteracy rate in kids who are graduating from high school. That means, these kids can't read a newspaper, balance a checkbook or read a bus schedule to get themselves to a job, let alone hold down a good job. This, in America, is a tragedy. And we must stop it. We must all be a part of the solution.

Reading aloud to children, beginning at the youngest age, is a big part of the solution. A national commission on reading found that reading out loud to a child for at least 30 minutes a day is the single most important factor to the child learning to read and loving to read. And so, on what would have been his 94th birthday, I say thank you to Dr. Seuss, whose given name was Mr. Theodor Geisel, for all the fantastic, creative and wonderful books he gave to countless numbers of parents and children to enjoy in this most significant activity for a child's success.

Many pro-literacy groups have sponsored activities so that every child in the country is read aloud to by an adult for at least a half hour today. I endorse this activity whole-heartedly—and I try to lead by example by reading to my reading partner in the Everybody Wins! program that I launched here in Washington three years ago.

The Everybody Wins! program pairs adult reading mentors with young children in elementary schools to foster a love of reading and of learning and to provide that critical reading aloud activity. I am so proud of all the Congressional Members and staff participating in the program—now totaling more than 450 reading every day of the week during lunch hour at two schools here on Capitol Hill. In all we now have 10 schools and 1200 reading partners and students participating in the Everybody Wins! program. But we must reach many, many more children. We need 10 times that if we are going to do what we should be doing in the District of Columbia.

The Everybody Wins! program has benefitted enormously from corporate support to help us reach more children.

As it happens, tomorrow night is the third annual event that makes expansion of Everybody Wins! possible—it is called Links to Literacy and takes place just a stone's throw from here in Union Station. With complete bi-par-

tisan support, and sponsored by the PGA tour we hope to be able to impact many more children in the year to come. I want to thank all of my colleagues who joined with me in lending their names to Links to Literacy and I look forward to seeing all of you tomorrow night.

Also, I want to commend some extraordinary programs at work in my home state of Vermont: Mother Goose Logs On, a collaborative effort between Nynex and IBM that improves literacy through interactive technology; the America Reads program that so many of our college students are tutoring in and the Vermont Center for the Book which has worked to improve access to books for kids in so many ways. When everyone in the community becomes involved and when adults read aloud to children—Everybody Wins!

I thank all my colleagues who helped pass this resolution.

I just want to indicate we have a number of these Links to Literacy '98, Everybody Wins invitations available to those who would like to participate tomorrow night. The Singing Senators will be there to make sure the event is enjoyable for everyone.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that Debra Ladner, an intern in our office, be allowed to be on the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, it is my understanding that we are in morning business. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. MACK and Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 187 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, February 27, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,520,668,318,465.51 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty billion, six hundred sixty-eight million, three hundred eighteen thousand, four hundred sixty-five dollars and fifty-one cents).

One year ago, February 27, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,349,403,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred forty-nine billion, four hundred three million).

Twenty-five years ago, February 27, 1973, the federal debt stood at

\$454,020,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-four billion, twenty million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,066,648,318,465.51 (Five trillion, sixty-six billion, six hundred forty-eight million, three hundred eighteen thousand, four hundred sixty-five dollars and fifty-one cents) during the past 25 years.

IN MEMORY OF SENATOR ABRAHAM RIBICOFF

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, today I would like to pay tribute to my friend Senator Abraham Ribicoff and his remarkable legacy. His passing has left a void in public service that will be difficult to fill. Over more than 40 years of public service, he set a standard for integrity, dedication, and wisdom that is difficult to match.

Abe Ribicoff's journey to the Senate was an arduous one. He was born not to power, but rather to poverty. His father was a Polish Jewish immigrant who worked in a factory and as a peddler. After graduating from high school, young Abraham Ribicoff worked for a year at a zipper and buckle factory in New Britain, Connecticut, to earn money to attend New York University. After a year, he transferred to Chicago. There, he was such an assiduous and gifted student that he was admitted to the University of Chicago law school—one of the most prestigious in the nation—without an undergraduate degree.

After graduating from law school, Abraham Ribicoff realized his calling was that of the public servant. He entered politics at an early age, but without the benefit of well-placed connections or cronies. He worked his way up from the lower house of the Connecticut legislature by mastering complicated legislation and earning the respect of his peers, and after ten years he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1954, Abraham Ribicoff was elected Governor of Connecticut.

His personal experience of poverty instilled in Sen. Ribicoff a compassion and a desire to serve the public good that never faded. The desire to help the unfortunate and marginalized members of our society was the hallmark of his political career. As Governor of Connecticut, he established a strong, progressive record. As the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the Kennedy administration, he promoted policies to improve the living conditions, working environment, and health care of all Americans. And as a Senator during the 1960s and '70s, he was one of the strongest supporters of Medicare, education funding, environmental protection and regulation, and auto safety standards.

Most of all, I remember Abe Ribicoff as a man of integrity who never wavered from his convictions or sacrificed his principles for political expediency. He was a statesman who disregarded opinion polls and governed by